

# MEDIA RELEASE



## Tradeswomen Australia Group Secures Major Federal Grant to Transform Women's Participation in Gippsland's Clean Energy Sector

13 March 2025

Tradeswomen Australia Group (TWA) proudly announces its successful bid in the highly competitive Building Women's Careers grant program, with the Gippsland Women's Fellowship Project receiving substantial federal funding. This pioneering initiative will directly address systemic barriers women face in clean energy careers while creating a sustainable framework for industry-wide transformation. This Project will be collaboratively delivered with key partners TAFE Gippsland and global energy leader Engie, whose expertise and commitment will be instrumental to the project's success.

Despite progress in workplace gender equality, Australia's clean energy industry remains severely imbalanced. Women represent nearly half (47.2%) of the overall workforce, yet comprise only 26% of the energy industry workforce, with a mere 5% in hands-on trades roles. The sector also has an average gender pay gap of 17.1% —significantly above the national average (WGEA). Persistent cultural and systemic barriers including recruitment bias, workplace discrimination, inadequate facilities, and limited career pathways continue to undermine women's participation and advancement in trades.

The Gippsland Women's Fellowship Project takes direct aim at these challenges through a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach:

### Project Highlights:

- **Specialised Training Environment:** Establishing a tailored Vocational Education and Training (VET) framework specifically designed for women entering clean energy careers
- **Direct Employment Outcomes:** Training and placing 30 women in skilled clean energy positions across the Gippsland region
- **Industry Transformation:** Partnering with regional employers to build inclusive, equitable workplaces that support women's long-term success
- **Regional Economic Impact:** Strengthening Gippsland's position in Australia's clean energy transition while addressing critical skills shortages

### Key Deliverables:

- **Skills Development:** Implementing a specialised Vocational Taster program tailored to regional women's specific needs and circumstances

- **Employer Engagement:** Providing hands-on facilitation for Gippsland's clean energy organisations to identify and eliminate systemic barriers
- **Career Pathways:** Creating clear, accessible routes for women to enter and advance in the clean energy sector
- **Sustainable Framework:** Building enduring partnerships between project stakeholders, national advocates, and local organisations
- **Scalable Model:** Developing a best-practice blueprint for replication across other male-dominated industries and regions

The project will operate across multiple Gippsland locations including Morwell, Loy Yang, Yallourn, and Hazelwood.

### **Clea Smith, CEO of Tradeswomen Australia Group**

*"This landmark program represents a genuine breakthrough in addressing the persistent gender inequity in Australia's trades and energy sectors. By creating tailored training, immediate employment opportunities and sustainable industry change, the Gippsland Women's Fellowship Project will deliver lasting benefits for women, employers, and the broader economy. Tradeswomen Australia is committed to ensuring this project not only meets but exceeds its ambitious targets, establishing a new standard for women's participation in traditionally male-dominated fields."*

### **Laura Macpherson, CEO of TAFE Gippsland**

*"The Gippsland Women's Fellowship Program is a transformative step forward in removing barriers for women in traditionally male dominated industries. In partnership with Tradeswomen Australia and ENGIE, this initiative is about more than just training. It is about reshaping the future of the clean energy workforce in Gippsland. By delivering a highly engaging and tailored vocational education framework, we are equipping women with the skills, confidence and direct employment pathways needed to thrive in this growing sector. At TAFE Gippsland, we are committed to fostering an inclusive and dynamic learning environment that supports women entering these industries and drives lasting cultural change across workplaces. This program will play a critical role in strengthening the region's clean energy transition while ensuring economic opportunities are accessible to all."*

### **Helena Moloney, Senior Community Engagement Manager, ENGIE Australia & New Zealand**

*"As we transition towards a net zero economy there will be a material increase in the number of roles required to get us there – and those roles cannot continue to be dominated by men. Putting a strong focus on gender equity within the workforce and improving things like specialised training and career pathways will have a positive impact on the diversity of our workforce which we know provides increased efficiency, productivity, innovation, and improved employee engagement"*

With this significant federal investment, Tradeswomen Australia Group is positioned to drive meaningful change in gender equity across Australia's trades sector, building from this focused initiative in Gippsland's expanding clean energy industry.

**About Tradeswomen Australia Group:**

Tradeswomen Australia Group is the nation's leading advocate for women in trades, working to increase female participation and success in trade and construction careers through targeted programs, industry partnerships, and policy development.

**For media enquiries, please contact:**

Clea Smith (she/her) CEO

(E) [cleas@twaus.com.au](mailto:cleas@twaus.com.au)

(W) [www.tradeswomenaus.com](http://www.tradeswomenaus.com)

Phone 0408 545 394